

Hon. William G. Young
U.S. District Court
District of Massachusetts
1 Courthouse Way
Boston, Ma. 02210

Re: William H. Burke of Hatfield, Ma.

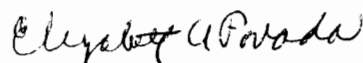
Dear Judge Young,

This is a first for me but I wanted you to have the benefit of what I know about Bill Burke before his sentencing. As a life long resident of Hatfield, I have known Bill his entire life. While I don't condone his involvement in what went on in the Probation Department during his tenure, I can well understand why Bill could get caught up in the atmosphere that apparently pervaded that department. I remember full well the pressures that were brought to bear in the selection of probation officers when I served on the Personnel Committee of the Superior Court. Further, as a son of William "Onions" Burke, a former chairman of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, Bill was exposed to political patronage as a way of life.

I worked with Bill in the District Court of Northampton. He was without a doubt one of the best probation officers I encountered in the court system. He helped countless defendants and their families in that capacity. He has also held a number of public offices in our home town of Hatfield. Of greater import is his personal attributes. He is a loyal friend, a devoted family man and a good considerate man. He was my brother's best friend. Every fall Silvio Conte, my brother and Bill would go hunting for pheasants. My brother supplied the dog. My brother died in 1991 from cancer and ever since then Bill has placed a feather upon his grave for each pheasant that Bill has killed-some twenty years or more. After my brother's death, Bill helped me secure medical treatment for my brother's wife. He even drove me to my first confirmation hearing before the Governor's Council. Similarly, Bill has helped countless other families in Hampshire County.

This case has exacted a tremendous financial and emotional toll upon his family and him. At age 71, undoubtedly stripped of his pension, he faces a bleak future. He has, however, many talents gained during the years that he served as a probation officer that could be put to good use in the larger Connecticut River valley. I would hope that you would seriously consider this as an alternative to any other sentencing consideration.

Very truly yours,


Elizabeth A. Porada

*Bill,
This letter was not
submitted by Bill Burke but
I gave him a copy. I
wanted to do something
to aid his plight!
Betty*